



State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Care Services



February 23, 2022

To: Tribal Chairpersons, Designees of Indian Health Programs,
and Urban Indian Organizations

Subject: Notice of Proposed Change to the Medi-Cal Program

The purpose of this letter is to provide information regarding a proposed change to the Department of Health Care Services' (DHCS) Medi-Cal Program that will be submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). DHCS is forwarding this information for your review and comment.

DHCS is required to seek advice from designees of Indian Health Programs and Urban Indian Organizations on Medi-Cal matters having a direct effect on Indians, Indian Health Programs or Urban Indian Organizations per the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). DHCS must solicit the advice of designees prior to submission to CMS of any State Plan Amendment (SPA), waiver requests or modifications, or proposals for demonstration projects in the Medi-Cal program.

Please see the enclosed summary for a detailed description of this DHCS proposal.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Indian Health Programs and Urban Indian Organizations may also submit written comments or questions concerning this proposal within 30 days from the receipt of notice. Comments may be sent by email to PublicInput@dhcs.ca.gov or by mail to the address below:

Contact Information

Department of Health Care Services
Director's Office
1500 Capitol Avenue, MS 0000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Tribal Chairpersons, Designees of Indian Health Programs,
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Page 2

February 23, 2022

In addition to this notice, DHCS plans to cover this SPA in the next quarterly Medi-Cal Indian Health webinar. Please note that Indian Health Programs and Urban Indian Organizations may request a consultation on this proposal at any time as needed.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Andrea Zubiate, Acting Chief
Office of Tribal Affairs
Department of Health Care Services

Enclosure



**Department of Health Care Services
Tribal and Designees of Indian Health Programs Notice**

PURPOSE

To seek the necessary approvals to revise the definition of Peer Support Specialists.

BACKGROUND

CMS approved SPAs 20-0006-A, 21-0051, and 21-0058, effective July 1, 2022, allowing Peer Support Specialists to provide Peer Support Services as a Medi-Cal Specialty Mental Health Service, Drug Medi-Cal and/or Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System service in counties opting to participate in the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program.

As approved by SPAs 20-0006-A, 21-0051, and 21-0058, a Peer Support Specialist is defined as an “individual in recovery with a current State-approved Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program certification and must meet ongoing education requirements.”

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES

SPA 22-0024 proposes to remove “in recovery” from the definition of a Peer Support Specialist. The purpose of this correction is to align with the required Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program, which requires Peer Support Specialists to be in recovery themselves or have lived experience with the process of recovery as a parent, caregiver, or family member.

IMPACT TO TRIBAL HEALTH PROGRAMS (THPs)

SPA 22-0024 will allow individuals in recovery, or parents, caregivers, or family members who have lived experience with the process of recovery to be certified Peer Support Specialists (provided they obtain a current State-approved Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program certification and meet ongoing education requirements) in THPs in counties opting to implement the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program.

This proposal does not add Peer Support Specialists as billable providers in THPs. DHCS will issue guidance via a Behavioral Health Information Notice regarding SMHS reimbursement requirements.

IMPACT TO FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CENTERS (FQHCs)

SPA 22-0024 will allow individuals in recovery, or parents, caregivers, or family members who have lived experience with the process of recovery to be certified Peer Support Specialists (provided they obtain a current State-approved Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program certification and meet ongoing education requirements) in FQHCs in counties opting to implement the Medi-Cal Peer Support Specialist Certification Program.

This proposal does not add Peer Support Specialists as billable providers in FQHCs. DHCS will issue guidance via a Behavioral Health Information Notice regarding SMHS reimbursement requirements.

IMPACT TO INDIAN MEDI-CAL BENEFICIARIES

SPA 22-0024 will allow Indian Medi-Cal beneficiaries who reside in participating counties, to receive Peer Support Services from certified Peer Support Specialists who are either in recovery themselves, or have lived experience with the process of recovery as parents, caregivers or family members.

RESPONSE DATE

Indian Health Programs and Urban Indian Organizations may also submit written comments or questions concerning this SPA within 30 days from the receipt of this notice. Comments may be sent by email to PublicInput@dhcs.ca.gov or by mail to the address below:

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